

REMARKS

Claims 7-24 remain in this application. Claims 1-6 were previously canceled. Reconsideration of the application is requested.

The issues raised by the Examiner in sections 2-4 on page 2 of the Office Action are addressed by way of the claim amendments above, and it is respectfully submitted that all claims in this application now comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

The comments provided by the Examiner in section 7 on page 4 of the Office Action are acknowledged with appreciation. Claims 9, 12, 13, and 20 are rewritten above in independent form and should be allowable. Claims 10, 16-17, and 21-22, which depend on claim 9, and claims 14, 18-19, and 23-24, which depend on claim 13, should be allowable as well.

Independent claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), along with dependent claims 8, 11, and 15, as being unpatentable over international publication WO 01/60544 to Barber et al. in view of U.S. Patent 3,487,668 to Fuchs, Jr. Reconsideration is requested. The Barber et al. reinforcement sleeve 102 is affixed within the hollow member 100 by either forcing punches 104 through smaller pre-punched holes formed in opposite hollow member walls 106 or by forcing those punches 104 through the walls 106 without any pre-punched holes. The Barber et al. publication does not disclose a perforating die in the hollow profile member or the act or operation of pushing a die into that member. Hydro-piercing is not utilized to produce holes resulting in the Barber et al. fixing flanges 108, and it is respectfully submitted that the rationale set forth by

the Examiner for his proposed modification to the Barber et al. disclosure, namely to "push a perforating die into the hollow profile of Barber *during the hydro-piercing formation of the holes...*" (emphasis added), is not appropriate.

The Fuchs, Jr. patent concerns an apparatus in which a mandrel is pushed into hollow stock. The Fuchs, Jr. mandrel, however, is a tool with channels adapted to expand the hollow stock rather than a perforating die. Piercing of the hollow stock is achieved by a punch 40 during a piercing step. A hydro-forming process typically would not allow pushing a perforating die into the hollow stock along its axis, since ends of the hollow stock are usually sealed by axial stamps to maintain a high internal fluid pressure. For this reason, the proposed combination of the Barber et al. and Fuchs, Jr. documents is inappropriate.

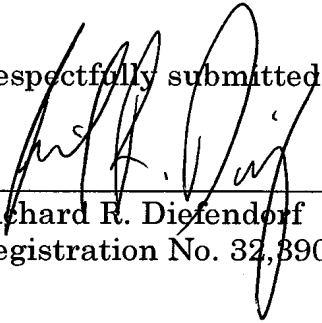
It is respectfully submitted that claim 7 is patentable in its present form for reasons discussed. Claims 8, 11, and 15 depend on claim 7 and should be patentable as well.

All of the claims in this application should now be in allowable condition. If there are any questions regarding this Reply or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an extension of time sufficient to effect a timely response. Please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #095309.57247US).

April 2, 2008

Respectfully submitted,



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